

Friends of the Sandia Mountains

Annual Newsletter, September 2012



Friends of the Sandia Mountains
P.O. Box 1832,
Tijeras, New Mexico 87059

From The President

Each year in this column I attempt to recall some event, situation or project from the past twelve months that seems to stand out in its significance. While this may appear on the surface to be a fairly simple task, the fact that our organization's members are so active and our projects and various undertakings so numerous makes it a challenge for the brain. It certainly does mine (no wise comments please!).

After considerable pondering, and in no way demeaning anything else that was done, I would have to say that our replacement of all the interpretive signs in the Crest area and the beginning of field work on our three-year commitment to the Talking Talons Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) in Tijeras were major milestones.

As many of you know, the years had not been kind to all the interpretive signs up at the Crest. Weathering and the seemingly ever-present vandalism that plagues that site had taken their toll. Many signs were faded, damaged or in some instances missing. At one location, sign

**Remaining Meetings of 2012:
7:00 pm at Sandia Ranger Sta.**

Tuesday, October 2

November: No Meeting

December: No Meeting

bases and frames had been built, but no interpretive signs were ever installed. Thanks to the persistence and hard work of Chairman Don Carnicom and the members of his FOSM Sign Committee, visually pleasing and helpful interpretive signs are in place and doing their job of explaining the many wonders of the Crest to visitors.

On February 20, 2011, FOSM signed a letter of commitment for in-kind services for the Talking Talons Wildlife Habitat Improvement and Landscape Restoration Education CFRP. Our job is to thin growth on a thirty acre portion of the project site in Tijeras. Our work began in earnest last fall and continued through the winter as weather permitted. Felling activity was suspended March through July due to migratory and nesting bird activity and will resume in October with the new fiscal year.

This project has provided considerable "trigger time" for our certified chain sawyers as well as giving the opportunity for training of a cadre of new sawyers. The outstanding response of our volunteer crew resulted in work produced that well surpassed the pro-rated goal for year one of

our three year commitment. Most of the wood produced from this work is intended for use as firewood to be distributed to needy families, usually through Boy Scout Eagle Projects.

There are many other highlights, such as our highly successful Annual Sandia Snowshoe Race, which will be outlined in the pages that follow. I trust that you will find that our hard-working and dedicated members continue the tradition of service that is the hallmark of our organization.

My sincere thanks to all our volunteers who have given so generously of their time, talent and treasure over the past year. Thanks also to the FOSM Officers and Board for their guidance and direction and especially to the staff of the United States Forest Service Sandia Ranger District, whose support and encouragement are vital to our mission.

See you on the mountain.
Bob Lowder

Phyllis Grein

From time to time we are reminded of the fragile nature of life, and so it was with our FOSM family when we learned of the passing of Phyllis Grein. Phyllis was an active volunteer who gladly applied her talents to the many projects undertaken by our hard-working paint crew. She will be greatly missed by her crewmates and by all of us who knew her. Our condolences go to her family and friends. (Bob Lowder)

Officers and Board Members	
President	Bob Lowder
Vice President:	Gerry Susman
Treasurer	Tim Brown
Secretary	Linda McDowell
Board Members	
Mike Coltrin	Don Carnicom
Jane Harrison	Anne Hickman
Sam Beard	Matt Bosquez
Dan Benton	Sally Lowder
Jim Lunn	
Officers listed above are also Board Members.	

My Introduction to Crosscut Saws

(Note: Jim Lunn began working on FOSM projects in January 2011 and was soon helping repair chain saws and design items that the volunteers use. He is now a member of the FOSM Board of Directors and is chair of the Equipment Maintenance Committee.) (Sam Beard)

1. My First Saw -- My first real involvement with crosscut saws started when I was given an old two-man crosscut saw by a friend of the family while visiting Texas in December of 2011. I was told that I could have the saw for free, if I would fix it up and return it to the woods where it was designed to be used. To fulfill my promise, I had to learn all I could about crosscut saws, how to "tune" them (jointing, sharpening, adjusting rakers, and applying set) and the tools needed to perform these tasks.

During my research I learned that vintage saws (50 to 100 years old), were made from better steel than modern saws. Today it is apparently too expensive to manufacture saws with the type of steel used in the past. These vintage saws seem to "sing", when properly tuned. I was

happy to learn that my saw was, in fact, a vintage saw. The blade is tapered from front to back, which allows the saw to cut with less friction and less chance of “binding”. Modern saws are flat (not ground thinner in the back), and therefore need more “set,” causing more friction and more drag.

After cleaning a lot of rust off my saw, I started the actual “tune-up”. I adjusted the length of the cutter teeth to make a uniform arc (called jointing). The radius of the circle that defines my saw is 15 feet 11.498 inches. Next, I built a tool to help adjust the length of the rakers (those teeth that scrape out the wood cut by the cutter teeth). Improper raker length seems to be a very common problem with many crosscut saws. My next task was to put the “set” in the teeth. The teeth are alternately bent, from side to side, to a precise angle. The amount of “set” determines the width of the cut called “kerf”. To “set” the teeth, I carefully strike the teeth with a small hammer against an anvil. I built my anvil from the head of an old sledge hammer. I also built an adjustable “spider gauge” (a small tool used to measure the amount of tooth set), to ensure that the teeth were uniformly set.

The next major step was to design and build handles for the saw. I decided to build “western style” handles. This type of handle can be used for both felling and bucking operations, has a finger guard and can pivot 90 degrees without the need for any tools. Next, I used a section of old fire hose, some one-inch strapping, and plastic buckles to make a full length safety cover to protect the saw and the sawyer when the saw is carried.

The only thing left was to test the saw. At the time, I was not certified on crosscut saws so I had to ask someone to test the saw for me. Thanks, Bob Lowder. I was very pleased when, after testing the saw, Bob said that the saw cut very well and that he would be happy to carry the saw three miles into the wilderness area to

clear trails. My first crosscut saw resurrection was a success.

2. Old Forest Service Saws -- After learning how valuable old vintage saws are, I realized why people were reluctant to allow new crosscut sawyers to use their vintage saws without constant direct supervision. I asked if there were any less valuable saws around that the new sawyers could practice with. I was told that the Forest Service had a bunch of old saws that were not valuable because they were very poor saws that didn’t cut well. They were described as “misery whips.” Forest Service personnel gave me permission to work on any of the saws that had been abandoned in a storage shed.

I chose a four-foot D-handle one-man saw and a six-foot two-man crosscut saw as my next projects. After cleaning up the four-foot saw, I did a full “tune-up”, designed and built a removable secondary handle, and made a safety cover. We tested that saw and learned that it worked very well. I then started on the six-foot saw. It was a much bigger challenge. Even though it had never been sharpened, the teeth were in really bad shape. It came from the factory with 15 misshapen teeth. After a lot of file work, I was able to reshape the teeth and then complete the rest of the “tune-up”. I also made another set of “western style” handles and a safety cover. This saw also cut well when tested. After the success with the first four-foot saw, I tuned-up a second Forest Service four-foot D-handle one-man saw. It too needed a secondary handle and safety cover. It also needed a new D-handle, which I built. These saws are now used on a regular basis.

3. My Second Saw -- While on a fishing trip to Canada with my brothers, I spotted a saw as we drove by a garage sale in Duluth, Minnesota. The saw turned out to be a three and a half-foot D-handle one-man saw. The saw teeth were worn-out, and the saw was very corroded, just the challenge I was looking for. To get this saw in working order, I did a lot of rust removal,

general cleanup, and completely refinishing the D-handle. Then the fun part started: the teeth. I had to cut new gullets between the teeth and re-shape every tooth in order to return the saw to working order. A complete tune-up finished the job. Now the saw cuts well and the short length makes it easy to be carried on the trails.

4. Tune-up of Bill Savage's saw -- Bill asked me to sharpen his three-foot D-handle one-man saw. This saw has a perforated lance tooth design and is in very good condition with almost no corrosion. The saw cut very well after the tune-up. I also made a removable secondary handle for this saw.

5. Linda McDowell's saw -- This saw is a work in progress. It is a six-foot two-man vintage crosscut saw that was given to Linda by her brother. The saw had a perforated lance tooth pattern but had been sharpened down to the point that the bridges between the teeth had been partially cut through. With my help, Linda has converted the saw from a worn out "perforated lance" to a fully functional "lance" tooth pattern. The conversion included cutting out the damaged bridges between the teeth with a Dremel tool. Future efforts will include a complete tune up and building a safety cover.

6. My New Saw -- On 1 August, 2012, Lou Romero gave me a saw that had been passed down to him from his family. The saw is a five and a half-foot vintage perforated lance two-man combination felling/bucking saw. The saw is in almost perfect condition with long teeth and no corrosion. The saw also came with vintage Atkins No. 8 removable handles. I did a quick tune-up and then took it to the woods to cut a danger tree. The saw cuts very well and is by far the best saw I have ever used. Thanks again, Lou.

7. Specialized Crosscut Saw Sharpening Tools -- In my efforts to restore these crosscut saws, I learned that specialized tools were required. I decided to design and build my own. So far, I have built a six-foot long adjustable

saw vise, a raker adjustment jig, a spider gauge, a customized anvil, a regular-sized six-inch jointer, and a special 12-inch jointer.

8. My Next Crosscut Saw Project? -- I don't really know what my next crosscut saw adventure might be, but I am definitely looking forward to using my saws on wilderness trees and helping others restore their saws so they too can share the enjoyment of learning about crosscut saws, how to return them to top condition, and to hear vintage saws "sing" again. (Jim Lunn)



Jim Lunn at stump of tree that he felled for crosscut saw certification

“Be Prepared!” – It’s Not Just For Boy Scouts!

This past August a FOSM volunteer crew working to clear trails in the wilderness on the north side of the Sandias unexpectedly became involved in a search and rescue effort. A young visitor, who apparently thought he knew the trail system in that area, for some reason wandered off Penasco Blanco Trail. Heading downhill, he eventually became lost, then fell down the side of a steep ridge, becoming trapped on a rock shelf. He did have a cell phone with him and was able to make a 911 call, but his battery died before he could give much specific information to the dispatcher. It was enough for search teams to begin to organize, but his location was only known as north of the Crest highway.

Late in the day, the FOSM crew was about a mile from the Osha Spring Trailhead when his faint calls for help were heard from a ridge or two to the west. Of the four cell phones on the crew, only one was finally able to get through with a 911 call. Eventually, a National Guard helicopter was able to lift the hiker off the mountain to safety. He was very lucky. Unfortunately, these situations often do not have such a happy ending. This young man’s lack of planning and preparation could have cost him his life.

Officials at the Sandia Ranger Station report that, during the summer months, the District averages at least one search and rescue operation a week. The vast majority of these involved persons who were poorly prepared for the activities they undertook.

Although some may think the term is overused, the term “common sense” (which many feel is sorely lacking anywhere these days – but that’s another story) is the best guide. A few things to consider before heading out for a hike in the Sandias:

- If at all possible, *do not hike alone*, particularly in the more remote areas. A

hiking buddy provides companionship and is a great resource if one becomes ill or injured.

- Carry a cell phone with a freshly charged battery. Although coverage is spotty at best in the Sandias, searchers may be able to track your location from your phone signal when it is on.
- If you often hike in remote areas, consider a “Spot” or similar satellite locator device.
- Carry an old-fashioned police type whistle. Shouting “help” when lost can quickly wear out your voice. A loud whistle is not like any sound in nature and won’t be mistaken for one. It also carries a long way. Three, short, quick blasts, repeated at intervals, denote distress.
- A small signal mirror, flashing in the sun, can assist aircraft in locating your position.
- Before you leave for your hike, let someone know where you are going and when you are expected back. Be sure and let them know when you return.
- Know Before You Go....Get maps of your planned route and study them. Ask locally about trail conditions if possible.
- Get a GPS and learn to use it. Mike Coltrin’s **Sandia Mountain Hiking Guide** with its many trail descriptions and GPS waypoints is a great resource.
- Carry a compass and learn how to use it with your maps. Good to have when your GPS fails.
- Anticipate changing weather conditions and be prepared for them. Rapid weather and temperature changes in the Sandias are the norm and not the exception.
- Many experienced hikers are always prepared to spend at least one night in the woods, even if only a day hike is planned. This means carrying things like a “space blanket”, waterproof matches,

flashlight, extra water, extra trail bars, etc.

- As always in our high, dry air, proper hydration is essential. Before every hike, carefully calculate how much liquid you will need, then take more.

While this list may not be all inclusive, it will serve as a reminder to always expect the unexpected and be prepared for when that happens. While it may not happen to you, like our FOSM trail crew, you may come upon it someday.

Given the usual readership of this newsletter, the above may seem like preaching to the choir, and that is OK. But those who are wise to the ways of the woods should always do their best to share that knowledge with friends and family and to let them know that our mountains are a beautiful place to visit, but dangers lurk there for the unprepared. (Bob Lowder)

Talking Talons Collaborative Forest Restoration Program

The task of the Friends of the Sandia Mountains in the Talking Talons Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) over a period of three years is to clear the pinon-juniper forest to restore meadow conditions on 14 acres of a 30-acre parcel at the northwest corner of the Sandia Ranger District (SRD) south of I-40. FOSM volunteers fell and limb the trees and buck the trunks into stove/fireplace lengths. This fuelwood is then piled and is available for collection by other CFRP collaborative partners. In addition to the meadow lands, Aaron Johnson, SRD Forester, defined four rocky ridges, one arroyo zone, and one archaeological site as No-Cut zones. The land outside of these No-Cut zones is designated meadow soil or terrain, and all trees with diameters less than 16 inches are to be felled.

From November 2011 through April 6, 2012, FOSM volunteers worked 866 hours over 15 days and cleared approximately 9 acres of for-

est. Four acres of scattered small pinons and junipers were cleared in the triangle in the easternmost part of the project site. Five acres of dense mature forest were cleared in the center of the project site. Tree felling was terminated at the end of March, because felling is not permitted from April 1 to July 31 during a bird nesting period.

The trees on the four acres near the access gate were too small to use as fuelwood. On the center five acres, each tree was felled and limbed, and the slash (branches) was scattered as specified in Forest Service plans for this CFRP. The maximum height of the scattered slash was 18 inches. Slash adjacent to arroyos was placed in the arroyo to reduce erosion. The dry slash does pose a fire hazard for some time after it is scattered. The tree trunks were either stacked or left where they fell.

All the trunks in the narrow 100-foot wide strip of meadow land in the north-central part of the site were bucked to stove/fireplace length and piled for collection by volunteers participating in Eagle Scout projects.

Between April 6, the last day FOSM bucked trunks, and May 5, the date of the first Scout project, FOSM volunteers observed that a few piles of bucked wood had been stolen. Later Talking Talons personnel noted that a significant amount of the wood remaining after the first Scout project had been stolen before June 2, the date of the second Scout project. In order to reduce the amount of stolen bucked fuelwood in future years, Talking Talons and FOSM are considering coordinating efforts more closely so that Talking Talons or other collaborators collect the wood the day that it is bucked or as soon as possible after it is bucked. (Sam Beard)

Banner Year for Trail Maintenance

The number of days on which trail maintenance was scheduled by FOSM increased significantly during FY2012. Maintenance of one or more trails was scheduled for 20 days which is about

40 percent of the weekly project days. The volunteers pruned branches and brush and removed fallen trees, leaners, and hang-ups on a total of 30 trails, and the maximum number of outings on one trail was the six on Survey Trail. On most work days, all the volunteers were in one crew, but on seven days there were 2 crews, and one day three crews. On September 21, 2011, volunteers worked on parts of five trails.

The increase in trail maintenance was due to reductions in other types of projects such as felling danger trees in picnic areas. Three other factors also contributed to an increase in the number of trail projects --- more certified sawyers and trained swamper (assistants), an increase in the number of volunteers on many days, and frequently younger retirees capable of more strenuous work.

Two examples of more strenuous projects this year were the trail maintenance of South Crest Trail on June 27 and work on Penasco Blanco, Osha Spring, and North Crest Trails on August 8. On the South Crest Trail project, seven volunteers and one USFS employee met at 5:30 am at the Ranger Station, hiked 14 miles from the Upper Tram Terminal to Canyon Estates near I-40, pruned branches and brush, and removed 17 trees from the trail.

Four volunteers also met early on August 8 and did work on three somewhat remote trails on the northern part of Sandia Mountain – Osha Spring Trail, the northern part of the North Crest Trail, and Penasco Blanco Trail which had not been maintained for many years. These diligent volunteers also heard the calls for help from a lost and injured hiker and assisted with the rescue. They returned home about 9 pm. (Sam Beard and Bob Lowder)

Junior Ranger Program

It has been a very slow year for the Junior Ranger Program. We have had a noticeable decrease in visitors to the top of the mountain. Also, the Sandia Peak Tram Company has be-

gun renovations to their building at the at the Upper Tram Terminal that housed the 4-Seasons Visitor Center. There are no programs being done from that area at this time. The Crest Visitor Center has had 50 children participate in the Junior Ranger program through 8/6/2012. (Sally Lowder)

Refreshments at Monthly FOSM Meetings

The FOSM Board thanks the following members who contributed refreshments for the monthly meetings: January and February, No meeting; March, Joy Bosquez; April, cancelled due to snow; May, Larry Littlefield; June, Bob and Phyllis Moore; July, Sally Lowder; August, Dan and Pat Benton; September, Linda McDowell; and October and November, Anne Hickman. (Anne Hickman)

Volunteers Fell 135 Danger Trees

Volunteers continued felling danger trees in picnic areas and at trailheads during FY2012. Kerry Wood, Sandia Ranger District, used the Southwestern Region Danger Tree Evaluation Form to designate trees with the following defects as danger trees: dead, dying, dead branches, exposed roots, cracks in trunk, lightning scar, leaning, insect damage, dead top, trunk wounds, forked trunks, cankers, bole (trunk) decay, cavities, and disease.

The number of hazard trees felled in the picnic areas and at trailheads from September 2011 through August 2012 is given in the table below. Please note that these numbers include numerous small trees felled in order to safely fell the marked hazard trees. The number of outings reflects the number of days or partial days in which trees were felled at a site. The total number of felled trees was 135 in these outings. Most trees were less than 18 inches in diameter, and the maximum diameter was 27 inches. The slash (branches) of the felled trees was chipped with the large Sandia Ranger District chipper.

Picnic Area or Trailhead	Trees Felled*	No. of Outings
Cienega Can.	52	4
Doc Long	4	1
Tree Spring	2	1
Dry Camp	5	2
Ski Area Over-flow Parking	3	1
Balsam Glade	9	1
Capulin Spring	8	3
Nine Mile	15	4
10K	7	2
Ellis	5	3
Crest Area	1	1
Las Huertas	20	1
Pine Flat	3	1
Oak Flat	1	1
Total	135	26
* No. of trees felled includes large and small trees felled in order to safely fell the marked danger trees.		

Chipping Slash at 14 Sites

Every year slash (branches from felled trees) is chipped with the large Sandia Ranger District chipper at numerous sites on the district including the Ranger Station and Shop. The sites and the number of chipping sessions at each site were: Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area (PA), 1; Cienega Canyon PA, 2; Doc Long PA, 3; Dry Camp, 1; Balsam Glade, 1; Capulin Spring PA,

3; Nine Mile PA, 1; 10K Trail Head (TH), 1; Ellis TH, 1; Crest Area, 1; Sandia Ranger Station, 2; Pine Flat PA, 1; Cedro Group Campground, 1, and Oak Flat PA, 1. Chipping the slash reduces tripping hazards, improves the appearance of the sites, and reduces the wildfire fuel loads. (Sam Beard)

Paint Crew Projects

The paint crew started the year in March with a special request to paint the inside of the USFS Information Area at the Sandia Crest House, and it was done in a nice beige color. Graffiti on the restrooms and signs was removed or painted over. April and early May was spent working with Karen Takai, SRD Fire Information Officer and her crew, who have been making new signs to put up on the district for the fire season. This work involved both Thursday and Friday. Much of the work was done at the SRD shop. New signs have been installed at Juan Tomas, Chamisoso, Dry Camp, Balsm Glade, Cedro, and Pine Flats picnic sites. Graffiti was removed at these sites, and touch-up painting of old signs was done.

In May, work was started at the Crest painting white parking stripes, handicap signs in turquoise and new No Parking signs in white. In June we had a change of scenery by going to Cienega Nature Trail (FOSM's adopted trail) where benches and rails were cleaned and repainted with BBQ brown paint. Also at Doc Long Picnic Area handicap signs were repainted with turquoise paint. The entrance signs to the Sandia Ranger Station were repainted with white and BBQ brown paint.

In July and August the crew returned to the Crest to begin work on cleaning and repainting all the rails at the Crest. This project is being sponsored by FOSM, who furnished all the paint (Rust-Oleum oil-based sand colored paint) and the brushes. At the close of this report we are still working on the rails at the Crest and also doing new No Parking signs there. This was a

much needed project as they had not been repainted for many years.

Paint crew volunteers were Matt and Joy Bosquez, Jean Payne, Rikki Barrett, Kerry Harmon, Jane Harrison, Anne Hickman, and Gordon Eatman. This year's work covered 17 days with eight volunteers working a total of 700 hours. (Jane Harrison)



Paint Crew Members Painting Crest Railings. K. Harmon, R. Barrett, and A. Hickman

Chainsaw and Crosscut Saw Training and Certification

For those FOSM members who want to be certified as chainsaw (cs) and crosscut saw (cc) operators, many hours of classroom training, field work, and practicum are required for final certification. All sawyers must have First Aid, CPR and Bloodborne Pathogens classes every 1 to 2 years depending on the criteria for the class. Thanks to Kitsie Hilaire Smiset for all her years of working with FOSM sawyers to keep their First Aid, Bloodborne Pathogens, and CPR certifications up to date. All saw certifications are good for three years, and then the sawyer must take a refresher class and have field certification again.

FOSM sawyers are some of the most hard-working, dedicated individuals on the District. They have answered the call to duty to help the Sandia Ranger District open the picnic areas each spring by removing danger trees marked by the USFS that might fall on people, cars, picnic tables, grills, amenity stations, etc. Our sawyers have been well-trained to precisely fell a tree so as not to damage these valuable items. They are also part of a dedicated Trails Crew that keeps the trails open on the Sandia Ranger District.

The following FOSM volunteers have met all the criteria for being a certified chainsaw or crosscut saw faller or buckler with both classroom and medical instruction: Sam Beard (cs), Dan Benton (cs, cc), Bob Lowder (cs, cc), Carl Smith (cs, cc), Bill Savage (cs, cc), Rav Nicholson (cc), Sally Lowder (cc), Paul Torno (cs, cc), Bill White (cc), Dave Gabel (cc), Keith Ferguson (cc), Linda McDowell (cc), Chris Fritzsche (cc), Diana Filliman (cc), Jerry Pekarek (cc), Larry Littlefield (cs, cc), Pete Rhyins (cc), Don Carnicom (cs, cc), and Jim Lunn (cc). Bob Galloway has had all the current medical classes and will be recertified for crosscut saw by Kerry Wood, USFS.

The following have had classroom instruction, medical requirements and field practicum for chainsaw certification: Jim Lunn, Dennis Crowther, Diana Filliman, Linda McDowell, and Bill White. Sam Beard has had classroom training for crosscut saw recertification, but the field work has not yet been completed. All of these people will meet with Kerry Wood, USFS, for their final certifications. (Sally Lowder)

My Introduction to Chainsaw Maintenance

My first real involvement with chainsaw maintenance began when, early in 2012, I was asked to order repair parts for a broken Husqvarna chainsaw. That first tasking led to considerable efforts to keep saws operational. Some of the saws available for FOSM use were retired by SRD fire fighters many years ago.

Keeping them in good working order can sometimes be a big challenge. I maintain a maintenance spreadsheet (designed by Sam Beard) to keep track of past problems with each saw. My chainsaw maintenance efforts ranged from relatively simple fuel/air mixture adjustments to major engine repairs like head and piston replacement. A partial list of more typical repairs includes replacement of spark plugs, fuel filters, air filters, brake band, clutch spring, sprocket needle bearings, chain oil tub, oil pump, and spark plug wires. Other efforts included repair of starter cord and reel spring, chain brake handle, starter switch wiring, and drilling and tapping and adding inserts to repair worn threads needed to hold down top covers. I also modified and installed aggressive “dogs” on several saws. Another project involved finding a way to safely store chainsaws. I designed a custom chain saw rack and with help from Sam, Bob and Sally, I built and installed the new rack in the hazmat building. I also helped build new chains of various lengths from bulk rolls of chain. In addition I sharpened about 45 chains and taught others (including Linda McDowell) to sharpen their own chains. Also, I made several bar safety covers from old fire hose. And finally, I was able to convince Sam to throw out several worn out chains. (Jim Lunn)

Adopt-A-Trail Coordination

We have sixteen groups/individuals with current Adopt-A-Trail agreements with the USFS on the Sandia Ranger District. Through the end of August 2012, seven of those groups have reported a total of 514 work hours on the trails. Our newly assigned Sandia District Archaeologist, Sandra Arazi-Coombs, has recently updated the clearance status of most of the more popular trails on the district, allowing a greater range of maintenance activities. With moderating temperatures, we look for a surge of activity before the fiscal year ends on September 30. (Dan Benton)

Adapt-A-Trail Report For Tecolote and Cienega Nature Trail

Each year FOSM spends time on Tecolote Trail and Cienega Nature Trail, which we have adopted. The twelve volunteers who worked 5.5 hours enjoyed the quietly running stream at Cienega and removed dirt, rocks, pine cones and other debris from the paved handicapped trail. A power blower was also used to remove any remaining dirt. The summer rains always bring an increased growth of grass along the lower trail that meanders across the two bridges and out to the road. A Stihl 450 brush cutter was used to trim all the grass. A Stihl power pole saw was used to trim some dead over-hanging branches on trees near the nature trail. Jane Harrison’s paint crew had already painted the benches and fences in the area.

Several work days on Tecolote Trail were planned this year to remove dead fall and to pick up trash and other litter. A few existing water bars were cleaned out as well. Brush cutters were used the entire length of the trail to remove the overgrowth of oak and to prune limbs of pines encroaching on the trail. A number of trees had been damaged by unknown persons and had to be removed for the safety of hikers as the trees were on the uphill side of the trail. (Sally Lowder)

FOSM Email Notification Groups

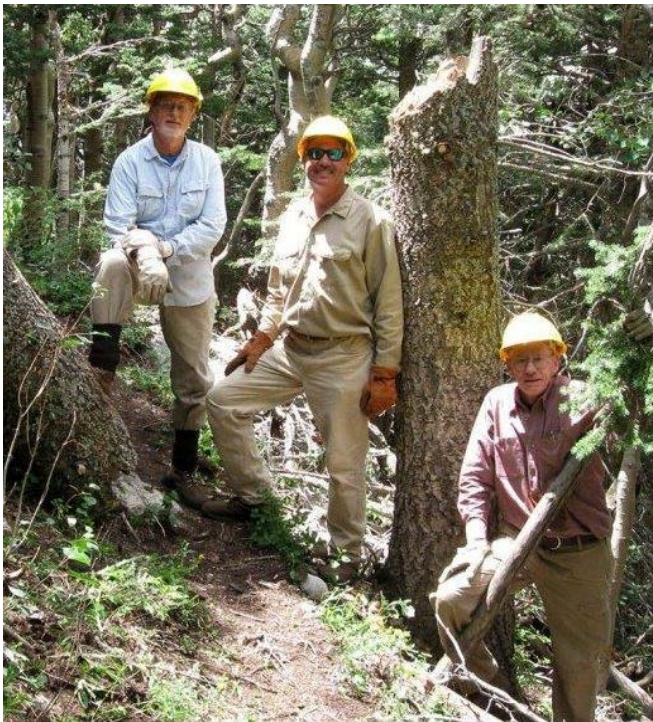
Communication to and between members is important for most organizations, and ours is no exception. To this end, several years ago FOSM created three email groups using the Yahoo Groups system which is provided at no cost. They are as follows:

Friends of Sandias – This group of about 110 email addresses is made up only of current members of the Friends of the Sandia Mountains. It is used to provide information that pertains only to FOSM members, such as election matters, etc. Messages going out to this group

must be approved by one of our assigned moderators.

NMFOF/Volunteers – This group of about 360 email addresses is made up of all FOSM members, other authorized USFS/SRD volunteers and others who have expressed an interest in receiving the information it provides. This system provides announcements of FOSM projects, monthly FOSM meetings, information from our partners at the USFS Sandia Ranger District, etc. Messages to this group also require approval by a moderator. (NMFOF stands for New Mexico Friends of the Forest, our original and corporate name.)

Cibola Trail Rangers – This group of 137 email addresses provides a forum for anyone to report trail conditions on our Sandia trails. Many of our projects have resulted from information provided on this system. Messages posted on this system do not require moderator approval. (Bob Lowder)



D. Benton, P. Rhyins, and C. Smith on Chimney Canyon Bypass Trail Work Day.

FOSM Publications

Recreation Guide to the Sandia and Manzanita Mountains – This year we continued to distribute this free visitors guide that includes information about picnic areas, camping, volunteer work, parking fees and passes, wilderness restrictions, temperatures and precipitation, maps, trail lengths and difficulty, and Leave No Trace. The guide is available at the Ranger Station, Crest Visitor Center, REI, Albuquerque Convention and Visitor Bureau, and Tinkertown. (Don Carnicom)

Sandia Crest Scenic Byway Guide – In March 2006, the Friends of the Sandia Mountains reprinted this guide that provides descriptive information for each of the numbered Autotour signs found along the sides of the Crest Highway. 1506 copies have been sold, mostly at the Sandia Crest House gift shop. Although this booklet was produced mainly as a public service by our organization, the sales through the years have provided us with a profit of \$542.16. (Bob Lowder)

Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains – We have sold 12,084 copies. (Gerry Sussman)

Programs at Monthly Meetings

Over the past year, we had the following speakers:

Oct. – Mike Butterfield talked to us about his beautiful New Mexico mountain book and showed some great photos.

Nov. – We heard about the fires of 2011 from Karen Takai with accompanying close up shots of the fires and firefighters.

Mar. – Robert Torrez, State Historian, gave a program about the military campaigns in the 18th and 19th centuries mainly against the Comanches.

April – Canceled due to weather.

May – We traveled to Antarctica with Pauline Ho to see and hear about her trip.

June – Bill Dunmire’s recent book **New Mexico’s Living Landscapes** was the subject of his presentation.

July – Ruthanne Hamrick shared her experiences in Kenya, including her climb of Mt. Kenya and running the Nairobi marathon.

Aug. – The geologic quirks of the Sandia Mountain was the subject of Dirk Van Hart’s program.

Sept. – Peter Fawcett, UNM Prof. of Earth Sciences, shared the results of his work over many years in the Valle Grande that revealed 200,000 years of temperatures in N. M. (Gerry Sussman)

FY2012 Financial and Physical Audits

In November, Art Arenholz and Don Peterson completed an audit of the financial records. They reported the records to be accurate and in good shape. In November, Don Peterson completed a physical audit of all of the FOSM physical assets. The physical assets mainly included tools and books. (Timothy Brown)

Treasurer’s Report

We began FY2012 on October 1, 2011, with a checking account balance of \$25,721.85, and on August 6, 2012, the balance was \$28,928.97. In addition, we have two CDs which total \$21,185.50 and rollover every six months. The largest expenses were \$3,073.96 for tools and supplies for weekly projects and \$2,895.07 for fundraising/publicity that included \$2,309.19 for Snowshoe Race expenses. The largest incomes were \$1,692.81 from donations, \$4,993.95 (net of \$2,684.76 after expenses) from the Snowshoe Race, and \$1,970.00 from memberships. (Timothy Brown)

Membership Report

We now have 113 memberships compared with 110 last year at this time. We added 16 new memberships this year. New members are Timothy McOlash, Kathleen Ackerson, Diana Filliman, Ian Maddieson, Suzanne and Greg Alan, John and Kathy Matter, Judy Fair-Spaulding, Dennis Crowther, Christopher and Aminta Fritzsche, Rita Snyder, Angela Welford, Peter Rhyins, Shanna Baker, Mike Beerman and Susanne Friedland, David McCreery, and Otto and Judith Appenzeller. Welcome aboard everyone! (Timothy Brown)

Sandia Ranger District Signage Program

Two years ago the Friends created a Signage Committee and undertook a major new initiative to inventory all signs on the Sandia Ranger District, evaluate which signs needed to be replaced, develop a plan for sharing the cost of new signs with the District, and purchase and install the signs on a timely basis. A program outline to carry out this initiative was generated.

Throughout the early months of 2011, signs were replaced based primarily on availability of existing replacements and the ability to repair and reinstall existing signs. The Signage Committee met every two or three months to further develop the program plan, work out the format for the District Sign Inventory, establish priorities for replacing signs with the greatest need, and review available manufacturing processes for the new signs.

As a result of this planning, a proposal was made to the FOSM Board in February 2011 to replace many of the interpretive education signs in the Sandia Crest, Kiwanis Meadow, Kiwanis Cabin and Tram areas. None of these signs had a digital data base, so whenever possible, a data base was created by scanning existing formats. Where that was not possible, the signs had to be created (replicated) from scratch. Nine new wildlife and geology signs were created for the location at the south end of the Crest parking lot

where empty frames sat for many years. Two graphic designers were hired to do this with the Signage Committee providing them all of the information (text, pictures, and diagrams) that was collected from many sources. Dana Howlett was an enormous help in moving that along as were a number of other FOSM members. The 27 new signs were ordered in the summer of 2011, and the last signs were delivered in September with the installation taking place during September and October. Now you are able to see these new signs at the Sandia Crest Observation Deck, the lower Crest parking lot, the Crest Nature Trail, around Kiwanis Meadow, at Kiwanis Cabin and at the Tram Nature Trail. Not every sign was replaced, but we think you'll be able to identify and enjoy the new signs along with the older ones.

The sign inventory for the entire Sandia Ranger District continued throughout 2011, and all of the raw field data and photographs were collected by late 2011. This involved taking two pictures of each sign, taking GPS (longitude and latitude) data for each sign, determining the sign material, and assessing the sign's condition. Linda Kearns and Lynn Ruger combined all of the raw data and the photographs into two inventory formats; one a detailed summary with an individual sheet for each sign and the other a more condensed Excel spreadsheet format, either of which will permit the extraction of information in a simple understandable way. Bill Geck assisted in acquiring the field data and Jim Lunn generated all of the diagrams describing the areas where a large number of signs exist in a very small area. Approximately 250 signs have been identified.

We still have a limited supply of Scenic Byway signs, and replacements are installed as ultraviolet degradation, vandalism, and disappearance take their tolls. Eventually, new signs will have to be ordered.

You may recall that early in the program we explored replacing some of the large highway

signs along the Crest Highway but decided that that task was best left to the Forest Service Supervisors Office and the New Mexico Department of Transportation. During this past summer, most of those signs were replaced.

We will continue to look at other signage issues such as missing maps on some of the trailhead information kiosks and not having a digital data base for the signs on the other nature trails. The sign inventory will continue to be updated as necessary.

Individuals interested in participating in this program can contact Don Carnicom (dmcarnicom@msn.com /281-3421). (Don Carnicom)

Donation to FOSM

Otto Appenzeller donated a Stihl Model 029 chain saw with 16-inch and 24-inch bars and chains. FOSM very much appreciates this donation and will use the saw for trail maintenance, felling danger trees, and cutting on various other projects. (Sam Beard)

Outreach

New Mexico Outdoor Expo 2012 – Each year the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMG&F) sponsors a free outdoor family event that they call the New Mexico Outdoor Expo. Among the various activities offered are archery, shooting (small bore rifles/pistols and air rifles), skeet shooting, muzzle loaders, rock climbing, kayaking, spin fishing and fly casting instruction, a fish pond for youngsters and numerous other displays and information booths. This year there was even instruction on how to use an Atl-Atl, a prehistoric spear throwing device. Expo is aimed at people and families who have an interest in any number of outdoor activities. FOSM has had a booth at this event for about six years. This has been a good venue for FOSM, and we have been able to get a lot of information out to the public about our group. Our FOSM digital projector, with its looping

photo presentation about our activities on the District, did a great job of getting the attention of passersby. The Expo broke all attendance records this year with over 4000 attendees over the weekend. We were especially pleased by the many folks who stopped by our table and said, "Hey, we've heard about your group!" We occasionally get new members or volunteers. A new volunteer has now been called up as a Type 2 Fire Fighter. Thanks DuWayne Wilford for your service! (Sally and Bob Lowder)

Harvest Festival and Wildlife Celebration – Don Carnicom provided FOSM information at a booth at Wildlife West for the Harvest Festival and Wildlife Celebration on Saturday and Sunday, August 25 and 26. (Don Carnicom)

Snowshoe Race 2012

The number of people signing up for the race on January 21 reached the 150 participant limit quickly in 2012. This slightly reduced revenues due to lack of significant increased late entry fees but made organization and planning easier. FOSM received about \$2700.00 in net proceeds from this event. FOSM's years of experience with the race was apparent in the smoothest operation to date with efficient reporting of finishers and timing. Thanks to all the volunteers whose hard work and dedication make this such a successful event each year. The 2013 race will be on January 19. (Matt Bosquez and Bob Lowder)

A Special Thank You

FOSM would like to extend a special "Thank You" and recognition to long-time member Don Peterson. Don has been a valued supporter of our organization for many years and an active participant in numerous phases of our mission. Among other things, he assisted with membership, newsletter publication, performing the annual audit, and obtaining and routing of official mail and has served on the FOSM Board of Directors.

Thanks Don for all you have done and continue to do. We sincerely appreciate and highly value your dedication to our organization. (Bob Lowder)

478 Trees Removed from Trails

The volunteer trail maintenance program managed by FOSM is divided into three parts – maintenance by individual Cibola Trail Rangers (CTR) e-group members, maintenance by volunteers on scheduled FOSM outings, and maintenance by AAT (Adopt-A-Trail) groups or individuals.

Cibola Trail Rangers E-group – Volunteers in the CTR e-group frequently visit the Sandia Ranger District and report trees across the trails to the e-group, and the information goes to all the e-group members. Usually within one or two weeks, CTR members will remove most of the trees under 12 inches in diameter year-round with hand tools on unscheduled outings. During FY2012, CTR members not associated with the AAT Program removed about 145 trees. Sam Beard maintains a record of reported and removed trees in a Word table. If you would like to be in the CTR e-group, call or email Don Carnicom, 505-281-3421, [d-mcarnicom@msn.com](mailto:dmcarnicom@msn.com).

Scheduled FOSM Trail Outings – FOSM schedules volunteer outings to remove fallen trees when either a large number of trees and/or large diameter trees are reported on a trail. Crosscut saws and/or chain saws may be used on these outings. This year volunteers removed 238 trees on scheduled outings.

Adopt-A-Trail Groups – Volunteers reported to the CTR e-group that 95 trees were removed on AAT outings by individuals or groups. All the trees removed by AAT groups were probably not reported to the CTR e-group.

The total number of trees removed from each trail by all the above groups was: Oso Corredor, 54; Pino, 42; South Crest, 42; Switchback, 40;

Osha Loop, 30; Survey, 29; Challenge, 29; Cienega Canyon, 24; Sulphur Canyon, 23; Chimney Canyon Bypass, 22; Faulty (all parts), 21; North Crest, 19; Tree Spring, 14; 10K North, 13; Rocky Point, 12; Piedra Lisa, 12; Tram Nature, 11; Bart's, 10; and Canoncito, 8. Twenty-three trees were removed from 10 other trails. (Sam Beard)



South Crest Trail Maintenance Crew. L to R: K. Wood, USFS, J. Pekarek, D. McCreery, L. McDowell, P. Rhyins, B. White, B. Lowder, and B. Savage

FOSM Fall Picnic

The fall Appreciation Picnic for FOSM members was held on October 22 at the Locust Picnic Site in the Oak Flat Group Reservation Picnic Area. FOSM provided a BBQ dinner, and 45 members attended. (Sally Lowder)

National Trails Day Project on Sandia Ranger District

The FOSM and High Desert Residential Owners Association (HDROA) 2012 National Trails Day Project on June 2 was replacement of the Pino Trailhead pedestrian pass-through and horse gate with a wheel chair accessible opening in the fence between the City Open Space and the Sandia Mountain Wilderness.

The horse gate was removed, and the pedestrian pass-through was converted into a 45-inch wide opening in the fence accessible by wheel chairs. The project was completed at about 12:30 pm, just in time to get to the Kiwanis Shelter for lunch and door prizes. (Sam Beard)

Other Projects

Cienega Canyon Trail Bridge Repairs – Two bridges near the Cienega Canyon Trailhead were repaired. Volunteers also obliterated a trail short cut that had developed at the upper end of the second bridge and reopened the official trail route. (Bob Lowder and Sam Beard)

Chain Saw Rack in Hazmat Building -- SRD Wilderness/Trails Program Manager Kerry Wood suggested that the chain saws should be removed from the hazmat building floor to reduce tripping hazards. Volunteer Jim Lunn designed a storage rack that would provide vertical storage for six saws. With FOSM providing the materials, Jim, Sam Beard and Bob and Sally Lowder built the rack in Jim's home shop, and it was installed in the hazmat building on January 26. (Bob Lowder and Sam Beard)

Storage Yard Fence Renovation – In January volunteers rebuilt the storage yard (Boneyard) fence near the shop behind the Sandia Ranger Station. The original untreated 2x4 stringers were deteriorating, and several vertical boards (pickets) had fallen off. New pressure-treated 2x4s were attached to the existing pressure-treated posts with lag screws, and each picket was secured to the stringers with four deck screws. Several pickets in bad condition were replaced with new cedar boards. The rebuilt fence is not only sturdier than the old one but also more attractive. FOSM purchased all the 2x4s, pickets, deck screws, and steel tie plates. (Sam Beard and Bob Lowder)



Volunteers on Repaired Cienega Canyon Trail Bridge. L to R: B. Savage, D. Carnicom, S. Lowder, B. Lowder, R. Nicholson, and S. Beard.

FOSM Project Participants

A total of 52 volunteers worked on at least one project in FY2012. About two dozen members frequently volunteer on the weekly Wednesday projects, and 10 to 20 members typically work each week. Nine members are on Jane Harrison's paint crew.

The FOSM officers, Board Members, and the Sandia Ranger District Staff appreciate very much the support of all the FOSM members.

The volunteers who worked on FOSM projects in FY2012 were Jim Lunn, Bob and Sally Lowder, Bill Metz, Sam Beard, Bill Savage, Rav Nicholson, Bob Moore, Larry Littlefield, Don Carnicom, Jane Harrison, Linda McDowell, Tim Brown, Carl Smith, Dan Benton, Pat Benton, Anne Hickman, Paul Torno, Jerry

Pekarek, Jim Loner, Bill White, Dennis Crowther, Lou Romero, Beth Corwin, John Ashcraft, Pete Rhyins, Chris Fritzsche, Nelly Fritzsche, Phyllis Grein, Matt Bosquez, Joy Bosquez, Jean Payne, Rikki Barrett, Kerry Harmon, Gordan Eatman, Merrill Callaway, John Thomas, Diana Filliman, David McCreery, Bet Gendron, Rodger Sack, Robert Edgar, Keith Ferguson, Ellen Watt, Eric Russell, Rich Besser, Susan Corban, Gerry Sussman, Mike Coltrin, Pauline Ho, Rick Buss, and Bill Geck. (Sam Beard)

FOSM Records Retention

Throughout the year we continued to get our corporate records collected and filed. Now all electronic files and hard copy records are stored in a locked cabinet in the FOSM office at the Ranger Station. The electronic files are stored on a flash drive that is updated about once a month. I also keep a duplicate set of files on another flash drive and on my hard drive. Any director issuing a document they wish to have retained can copy it to the email address, fosmrecords@friendsofthesandias.org, and it will end up on the flash drive. We plan to scan all of the hard copy records and add them to the electronic records when we can find somebody available to do it. (Don Carnicom)

Publication of the FY2012 Newsletter

A huge thanks to Sam Beard for publishing the FY2012 Friends of the Sandia Mountains Newsletter with technical help from Jim Lunn. This is our year-end historical review for FOSM and is available for all members, volunteers, and visitors to our meetings. (Sally Lowder)

FRIENDS OF THE SANDIA MOUNTAINS

If you hike, bike, ride a horse or use the Sandia Mountains in any way, we know you enjoy what nature has given us. As you know, all this traffic takes a toll on our forest lands. Working in conjunction with the **United States Forest Service** as a volunteer organization, we provide many services in support of the Sandia Ranger District.

WHO WE ARE

Friends of the Sandia Mountains is a non-profit organization of local volunteers. We are dedicated to working in partnership with the USFS, other groups, and individuals to maintain, protect and restore the natural, cultural and scenic resources of New Mexico's forest lands for the enjoyment and use of present and future generations. Our focus is conservation and education within the Sandia Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest and adjacent lands.

WHAT IS THE NEED

This uniquely beautiful land can't wait another minute. It truly needs our help! As USFS funds are inadequate to handle the increasing demands on the forest land by the public, the Friends of the Sandia Mountains will work to help meet the forest needs. Learn more about how you can be a part of this vital effort.

WHAT WE DO

Conservation
Education
Restoration
Danger Tree Removal
Sponsor Annual Snowshoe Race
Trail Construction & Maintenance
Junior Ranger Program
Visitor Services
Published "Recreation Guide to Sandias"
Adopt-A-Trail
Co-publisher of **Field Guide to the Sandia Mtns.**

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN OR RENEW:

You can be part of this effort; work with friends, visitors and USFS personnel.

Tell us briefly how you would like to participate & we will get back to you.

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone & Email

Dues:

- \$10 Student
- \$15 Individual
- \$20 Family
- \$30 Sustaining
- \$50 Sponsor
- \$100 Benefactor
- \$250 Life Sponsor
- \$500 Corporate Sponsor

Please make your check payable to:
Friends of the Sandia Mountains

Mail To:

Friends of the Sandia Mountains
P. O. Box 1832
Tijeras, NM 87059

www.friendsofthesandias.org

FOSM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Dues and donations are tax deductible.